glove, and Opium are all of them properly placed by authors under the head of Narcotics. But of these, Tobacco is an emetic, Henbane a cathartic, Foxglove a diuretic, and Opium, while it checks all other excretions, is itself sudorific. Mercury, under its different forms and modes of administration, is capable of fulfilling half a dozen different intentions. The classifier of medicines then can do no more than to arrange them by their most obvious and well known properties, whatever these may be, leaving it understood that the name of a class is by no means fully descriptive of the character of its contents.*

In forming a selection of sixty plants to be represented in this work, it has been endeavoured to choose those which are among the most interesting to botanists, at the same time that they possess claims upon the attention of medical men. It is by no means to be asserted that all these possess so decided an efficacy as to entitle them to the rank of standard medicines, or to make it advisable that pharmacopœias should be swelled by their introduction. A part of them no doubt are eminently entitled to this distinction. Others are efficacious only in a second degree,

* For a botanical arrangement of the plants, see the systematic index at the end of the volume.

but are still in use, and often advantageously so, in the hands of country practitioners. There are some of yet inferior efficacy, which, having formerly enjoyed a certain degree of medicinal notoriety, are inserted here with a view of defining their true character.

The progress of botanical students is much facilitated by the possession of correct drawings and dissections of a variety of dissimilar plants. In this country botanical figures, especially of American plants, are scarce, and accessible to but a small number of those who pursue this study. It is hoped that the present work may, in a certain degree, supply the deficiency, at least until the extension of natural science among us, and the increased number of botanical students, shall call forth and support works of greater magnitude.

A part of the plants contained in this work have never been figured in any botanical work. Others have been represented a great number of times; yet their importance, in a medical point of view, required their admission; and the figure being always made from an American specimen, it may, on this account, be not destitute of interest.

Having arrived at the termination of the American Medical Botany, the author feels it

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